



CONGRESSIONAL HEARING RESUME

106TH Congress

Date: 13 Oct 99

SUBJECT: Reduced Force and Readiness Issues

**COMMITTEE: Senate Armed Services Committee,
Subcommittee on Seapower**

CHAIRWOMAN: *Olympia Snowe (R - ME)

MEMBERS

PRESENT (*):

REPUBLICANS

**John McCain (AZ)
Robert Smith (NH)
Jeff Sessions (AL)**

DEMOCRATS

***Edward M. Kennedy (MA) ranking
*Charles S. Robb (VA)
*Jack Reed (RI)**

WITNESSES: See Attached

Information contained in this resume was obtained during an open hearing. It will not be released outside of the Department of Defense (DOD) agencies until published hearing transcripts have been released by the Committee, and only to the extent it is in accord with published hearing procedures.

Prepared by: Lt Col Bouchard Date: 13 Oct 99 Ext: 697-7951

WITNESSES

PANEL 1

**V/Adm William J. Fallon,
Cmdr, US Navy Second Fleet**

**V/Adm Daniel J. Murphy, Jr.
Cmdr, US Navy Sixth Fleet**

****Maj Gen Charles H. Coolidge, Jr.
USAF, Director, Operations and Logistics, USTRANSCOM**

**M/Gen Emil R. Bedard
Commanding General, II Marine Expeditionary Force, USMC**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Subcommittee focus was on trying to understand the challenges our military forces face with the continuing challenge to meet ever increasing worldwide taskings. They are concerned that we have reduced personnel and equipment strengths too far to meet these varied commitments. In addition, they expressed a concern that our military forces are adequately equipped to support our National Military Strategy. The committee fears that we are teetering on the verge of the hollow force that existed in the '70s. They also expressed concern that the services have adequate training opportunities and funding to maintain a superior force. Finally, there was a real focus on whether or not the military can support two MTWs and what risks exist in doing that with our limited equipment and reduced readiness rates.

The Committee was called to order at 0930

PANEL 1

Chairwoman Snowe's opening remarks

Stated her concern about the military's ability to meet their commitments to support the National Military Strategy. She voiced her concern for spares, munitions, personnel support, and overall readiness. She stated that we may have reduced our forces and equipment to the point that we no longer have "shock absorber" to meet varied worldwide commitments. She is particularly concerned with the military's ability to support two MRCs. She questions the adequacy of our naval fleet, force structure and AF strategic air assets to respond to all of today's contingencies. She applauds all the men and women in uniform for all they do during these challenging times.

Sen Kennedy

Expressed that this was the first hearing of this type in years and was grateful for the opportunity. He mirrored the concerns of Sen Snowe, particularly the challenges we have with force projection with our reduced personnel and equipment strength.

Sen Reed:

Stated that he was very concerned with the on-going operations/personnel tempo that placed a burden on military personnel. He continued to say that our capability to support Mobility requirements and support stealth technology is vitally important to support our National Military Strategy.

Maj Gen Coolidge:

We are deployed to more locations all over the Globe than at any other time since WWII. The Warfighter must have trust that we can meet our Global Mobility commitments. Our success is the quality people we have in the military. Leadership is working to overcome our limitations with a focus on increased sealift, increased prepositioned equipment and munitions, improved joint planning and execution, and increased airlift. We still have to deal with declining airlift capability coupled with increased requirements. There is a risk with over tasking our Reserve Forces that make up 59% of our tanker force; we are challenging their volunteerism. We are challenged to meet our peacetime non-DoD requirements in addition to supporting our CINCs.

OTHER WITNESSES:

USMC- Focus needs to be on training, force readiness and aging equipment. **Navy 2nd Fleet-** Military is stretched very thin, but our quality people continue to excel. Critical to understand that the force lacks the depth which limits our capability to surge and remain flexible. **Navy 6th Fleet-** we have insufficient numbers to do the job, train, meet contingency commitments. Global Navy Policy of timeshare forces between regions creates instability with Perstempo and increased readiness risk.

Some Key Comments, Questions and Answers:

- Chairwoman Snowe asked all witnesses to give their perspective to compare the conditions today with the hollow force of the 70s.
- All witnesses stated that we were at a very different starting point compared to the 70s with much improved capability, depth, and quality personnel that did not exist in that time frame. They state the biggest challenge that currently exists is not having the depth of personnel or equipment to meet today's multiple taskings. The important question to examine is how long can we sustain this.
- Maj Gen Coolidge stated that decreased aircraft reliability/aging systems has impacted us in that it takes us two aircraft to do what should require one.
- Sen Kennedy stated the military is trained to fight wars and that Congress should set realistic priorities for us to support within our current capabilities. Or, Congress should equip us so we can meet all these contingencies.
- Chairwoman Snowe voiced her concern on how we draw the line for military priorities/taskings and feels that we no longer have any shock absorber left. She then focused on whether or not we can support 2 MTWs. Each witness stated that there were risks involved with supporting two.
- Maj Gen Coolidge was asked if we supported an MTW during Kosovo. His response was that we supported 1 MTW with tankers; but airlift and sealift was not stretched to one MTW.

Chairwoman Snowe's Closing remarks:

Appreciated everyone's time and expertise in addressing the challenges we face relative to the readiness strength of our military force.

The hearing concluded at 1230.